



Legislation Text

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REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 01/19/2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Community Services Department

SUBJECT:

The City of Corona's Community Based Organization Grant Program Funding Utilizing an Appropriation from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On November 3, 2021, staff presented options to appropriate American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds to the City Council for approval in the amount of \$29,077,125 for the City of Corona. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 allocates funds to states, territories, tribal areas, counties, and cities for relief affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The City allocated \$500,000 from the City's \$29.2 million allotment to support the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) titled Nonprofit Grant Program.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

- a. Approve an equal annual allocation of \$166,666 in Community Based Organization Grant Program funding over the next three fiscal years starting with Fiscal Year 2023 and ending in Fiscal Year 2025.
- b. Approve the Community Based Organization Grant Program application and set the minimum funding award at \$2,500 and the maximum award not to exceed \$25,000 per organization per funding cycle.
- c. Authorize staff to solicit applications for funding from the Community Based Organization Grant Program from local nonprofit organizations during the life of the program.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 appropriates nearly \$220 billion to states, territories, and tribal areas, and \$130 billion to cities and counties for the COVID-19 pandemic relief. Funds are distributed to recipients in the form of a block grant. For cities that are eligible to receive the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) (i.e., "metropolitan cities," generally with a population of 50,000 or larger), funds are allocated according to a CDBG distribution formula rather than by population. For smaller cities and counties, ARPA provides that dollars will be distributed solely based on population.

ARPA funding is allocated to states, territories, tribal areas, counties, and cities for relief affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. On November 3, 2021, the City Council allocated \$500,000 from the City's \$29.2 million allotment to support a new CIP titled Nonprofit Grant Program. The Nonprofit Grant Program is outlined in the analysis of this report and will be referred to as the City of Corona's Community Based Organization Grant Program. The purpose of the program is to support local nonprofit organizations offering direct services to Corona residents which align with the City's Strategic Plan but are not offered by the City of Corona. The grant awards from the Community Based Organization Grant Program will leverage the expertise and the impact of the City's nonprofit partners to better serve the community.

ANALYSIS:

The City of Corona has been committed to serving its residents in partnership with local nonprofit agencies. To qualify as a nonprofit organization for any of the City of Corona's grant programs, the agency needs to have a 501(c)3 designation from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and be recognized as a nonprofit organization by the State of California. The Community Based Organization Grant Program will be added to the existing grant programs offered by the Community Services Department. The Community Assistance Division administers Community Based Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on an annual basis. These funds provide resources to improve the physical, economic, and social conditions within the community to benefit low-and moderate-income residents. In addition, the City of Corona also offers Co-Sponsorship Programs to Corona nonprofits. The Recreation Division of the Community Services Department administers the City's Co-Sponsorship Program. This program seeks applications as part of a collaborative effort to strengthen our partnerships with Corona nonprofits by providing organizations with a chance to apply and submit dates to utilize City facilities for their events based on availability. These existing programs provide an excellent structure for the development of the Community Based Organization Grant Program. This new program will be modeled on these existing programs.

Based on the guidelines of the ARPA funding, the City's Community Based Organization Program will have a maximum five-year deadline to expend the ARPA funds, with the goal of disseminating the funds within three years. With this goal in mind, City staff is recommending to disseminate the funds over three budget cycles as seen below:

| ARPA Funding Dissemination Schedule | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| FISCAL YEAR | AMOUNT |
| 2023 | \$166,666 |
| 2024 | \$166,666 |
| 2025 | \$166,666 |

**Total amount of approximately \$499,998 with approximate appropriation of \$500,000*

This appropriation of ARPA funds will play a significant role in providing critical services to Corona residents through community partnerships that support the City of Corona's strategic goals. The Community Based Organization (CBO) Grant Program will keep the City's vision of creating a safe, vibrant, and family-friendly community at its forefront and provide funding to Corona organizations supporting the City's commitment of creating a community where everyone can thrive. The program will fund nonprofit activities which strengthen the social, family, or economic fabric of the Corona community.

The CBO Funding Program Process

The Community Based Organization (CBO) Grant Program will have two primary components: 1) an annual application process, and 2) an on-site evaluation for approved grant programs. City staff will distribute a request for applications shortly after approval of this item by way of the City's social media platforms and electronic distribution lists and publications, as well as directly reaching out to nonprofit organizations that the City already has current partnerships with that serve the Corona community. The City is currently working with more than 450 community based organizations that provide services to the Corona community. Staff expects to present a recommendation of awards in Spring 2022 for the City Council's consideration. Applicants will be notified once the City Council has approved the awards and the grant will open at the beginning of the new fiscal year.

To set parameters on the awards, it is proposed that the Corona CBO Program will have limitations on minimum and maximum funding requests. The minimum funding that will be awarded would be \$2,500 and grant funding requests will not exceed the maximum award of \$25,000 per organization. The minimum amount of \$2,500 is enough to benefit organizations to support their projects and justify the administrative costs. Providing a maximum amount of \$25,000 allows several organizations to leverage these grant monies for larger capital projects and still allows multiple agencies to receive awards from the \$166,666 annual allocation.

CBO Evaluation Process

Corona CBO proposals will be evaluated based on criteria which include the number of Corona residents or students served, how the proposed programs align with the City's strategic plan, and how well the program impacts the current needs of the Corona community. In addition, to mirror the City's already approved Co-Sponsorship Program, City staff will review the applications and evaluate how the applicant's scope of work align with Corona's strategic plan and will bring the recommendations to the Committee of the Whole and to the City Council for final consideration and approval.

Since this is the initial inception of CBOs for the City of Corona, non-profit organizations that receive funding through this program will receive support from City staff to ensure that the organizations are staying within their scope of work as well as meeting their deadlines in order to receive grant funding.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Funding in the amount of \$500,000 is available in the CIP titled Nonprofit Grant Program, Project No. 76770, within the American Rescue Plan Act Fund 413.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. The Community Based Grant Program provides funding to organizations to support their operations and will have no significant impact on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

PREPARED BY: VIOLA VAN, MANAGEMENT ANALYST II

REVIEWED BY: ANNE K. TURNER, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

Attachments:

1. Exhibit 1 - Community Based Organization Grant Program Application